



What have we been doing during the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic?

As the world shuts down due to the widespread Coronavirus, there are many questions that erupt for people whose livelihood depends on the money they earn from their jobs. When the countrywide lockdown was implemented in India, many people, especially the poor lost their livelihood and hit badly.

In times of such uncertainty and hopelessness, this month's issue brings to you stories of hope. Each story is a reminder of the immense strength of community platforms and of the zealous efforts of SHGs and frontline workers.

Distribution of CHELI Sanitary Pads to Sanitation Workers in Warangal

CHELI is a self help group led enterprise in Warangal. Warangal is one of the intervention cities for UMC's LIVES (Livelihood enhancement, Inclusive development and Vulnerability Elimination in Sanitation) Program, a convergence programme between Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) and National Urban Livelihoods Mission.

The Commissioner of GWMC, Pamela Satpathy, collaborated with the CHELI Sanitary Pads team to distribute sanitary napkins to all the women sanitation workers in their wards. There are a total of 1136 women sanitation workers across 58 wards. She instructed the secretary to hand over the required



Figure 1 and 2: The Commissioner, GWMC, Pamela Satpathy distributing the Cheli Sanitary Pads to the women sanitation workers; Cheli Sanitary Pads all packed and ready to be distributed to women sanitation workers in all the wards of Warangal.

Another instance from the CHELI team was when their sanitary pads were distributed to the women in the Mumbai slums.

Distribution of CHELI pads by GSC in Mumbai Slums

It all began when the Cheli Sanitary Pads team from Warangal was approached by the Global Shapers Community, Mumbai during the lockdown. As part of their initiative on menstrual hygiene, GSC was looking to collaborate with suppliers who could support their relief work effort. Their COVID-19 relief project was focused on providing essentials to those acutely affected by the nationwide lockdown, including providing menstrual products to women from vulnerable groups.

They wanted CHELI to deliver sanitary napkin packets to their Mumbai unit which would then distribute in the city's slums. CHELI was more than happy to help and agreed to send the sanitary napkins in no time. A grateful GSC very quickly placed an order of 500 packets of their pads. To do their bit and contribute to the Covid-19 relief project, CHELI proposed to pay 50% of the transport cost just so they could help the urban poor women.

After a few delays in sending the parcel due to the lockdown, it finally reached the Global Shapers Community unit in Navi Mumbai thanks to the GWMC. They soon completed the distribution of all 500 packets to slum dwellers and marginalized women in low income communities in Govandi and Turbhe areas of Mumbai and Navi Mumbai respectively. This was a feat, especially when we were amidst a pandemic. Not just GSC but CHELI and every person who was involved in making sure the parcel reached Mumbai was equally responsible for helping the women living in these slum areas. It is in times of such dire distress that people and institutions like these come through and give us hope.



Figure 3-5: The GSC team members distributing CHELI sanitary pads to the women living in Govandi and Turbhe areas of Mumbai and Navi Mumbai

A Rapid Joint Study on Health and Safety of Sanitation Workers during COVID Pandemic, in Collaboration with WaterAid

UMC in collaboration with WaterAid, India carried out a rapid study to find out the challenges faced by sanitation workers for their health, safety, and livelihood during this pandemic. The objectives of the study were to understand the challenges related to health, safety, working conditions and livelihoods faced by various categories of sanitation workers in the COVID-19 context and study the measures taken by the government and employers in order to highlight gaps and suggest measures to help them.

The findings of the study were shared through a webinar. The webinar was hosted by Manvita Baradi, Director, UMC and VK Madhavan, Chief Executive, WaterAid India. The session also had **Mr. Sanjay Kumar**, IAS, Joint Secretary (Day-NULM), MoHUA, **Mr. G Mathivathnan**, IAS, Principal Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Govt. of Odisha, **Ms. Pamela Satpathy**, IAS, Municipal Commissioner, Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation, and **Ms. Amarjeet Kaur**, IAS, General Secretary, All India Trade Union Congress. They discussed the challenges faced by sanitation workers in their states and the measures they have taken so far in order to protect them especially from COVID-19. Their passionate concern for their safety made the webinar a very open space for productive dialogue.

In case you missed out on the webinar, here is a recording for you: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECRupZ0tGnc>

If you have any questions, you can write them in the comments section so we can get back to you with an answer.

WEBINAR

Health & Safety challenges faced by sanitation workers during COVID-19 pandemic



Sanitation workers are among the nation's most essential workforce who continue to work, even amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. By doing so, they put themselves at a high risk of infection, which magnifies in the absence of adequate PPE and hygiene measures. Centuries old discrimination, stigma and lack of social protection add to their vulnerabilities.

A joint rapid study was conducted by WaterAid India and Urban Management Centre on the challenges faced by sanitation workers for their health, safety and livelihoods during this pandemic. It has brought out critical insights for immediate measures that can be taken in the pandemic context, and long term systemic measures for ensuring their safety and dignified livelihoods.

Colleagues from Urban Management Centre and WaterAid India will present the findings of the study. A panel of prominent urban administrators and experts will discuss the findings and the way forward.

Panelists

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, IAS
Joint Secretary (Day-NULM), MoHUA

Mr. G Mathivathnan, IAS
Principal Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Govt. of Odisha

Ms. Pamela Satpathy, IAS
Municipal Commissioner, Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation

Ms. Amarjeet Kaur
General Secretary, All India Trade Union Congress

Moderation

Manvita Baradi
Director,
Urban Management Centre

Summing Up & Way Forward

V K Madhavan
Chief Executive,
WaterAid India

Date: Tuesday, 30th June 2020
Time: 2.30 pm to 4.00 pm
Register Here: <https://bit.ly/2NxomAe>

RSVP/queries:

Kanika Singh, WaterAid India.
kanikasingh@wateraid.org

Prerna Somani, Urban Management Centre.
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MISAAL Samiti takes lead to set up a Community Kitchen in Nagoriwad, Ahmedabad

Chamunda MISAAL committee was formed by UMC and SAATH under the MISAAL program in order to empower people from within the community to emerge as leaders who provide help to the community. Since then, members have emerged as leaders to help the community.

One of the committee members of MISAAL Sanitation Committees, Jagdish Bhai from Nagoriwad, found that approximately 150 people in the slum were in urgent need of ration or cooked food during the COVID-19 lockdown. In order to mobilize ration for the slum dwellers, the MSCs contacted the local organizations/volunteer groups for funding. After several attempts, one volunteer group 'Department of Happiness' came forward to provide ration.

The committee members with the help of the community at large arranged the necessary resources and logistical arrangements for cooking like utensils, stoves, etc. Due to such efforts and strong leadership of MSC and Jagdish bhai, a community kitchen was set up. Seven members began cooking daily meals for 150 people. The food was distributed to them at their doorstep to restrict chaos and maintain social distancing in the community.

Support for Urban Wage Employment Initiative (UWEI) in Sambalpur, Odisha

The state government of Odisha rolled out Urban Wage Employment Initiative (UWEI) to provide employment to the people who have lost their daily wage jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The scheme plans to implement slum-level developments (among other urban improvement works) by engaging slum dwellers associations (SDA). It aims to provide support for a temporary duration, from April to September 2020.

The creation of SDA involves formation of settlement level groups of ten representatives who can take up work for the identified slum level improvement that involves labour. Under this scheme, SDAs are planned to be registered as an entity with linkages to a bank account.

The UMC team is supporting Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) to establish these SDAs through MISAAL Settlement Committees (MSC) and propose eligible projects for the slums. So far 28 such SDAs have been created in Sambalpur (as of 1st June 2020). The SDAs comprise members of the MISAAL committee partially or completely. The MSCs plan to take up slum level improvements under this and are supporting SMC to implement work efficiently.



Figure 5-6: UMC and MISAAL committee members helping Sambalpur Municipal Corporation to form SDAs

Free Tuition Classes by Youth Misaal Samiti in Takiyavali Chali, Ahmedabad

MISAAL Samiti, known as Youth Misaal Samiti in Takiyavali chali, Ahmedabad has pioneered free tuition classes for 60 children from their area during the COVID-19 lockdown. After municipal schools were shut down during the lockdown, children from marginalised communities have been roaming around with no activity to hold them in one place. Their progress in education has also stopped as children in slum areas have very few to no resources to learn or play. Through crowdfunding, two members - Sujal, and Uttam set up the class and provided stationery to the children.

The Youth Misaal Samiti in Takiyavali chali, Ahmedabad have been running the classes in three batches for different standards (3rd to 8th Std). They are trying to maintain social distancing as much as possible in a confined space. They have started the classes since 3rd July, 2020 and plan to run them till the municipality schools re-open.



Figure 7-9: The happy faces of children with the MISAAL Youth Samiti in Takiyavali Chali, Ahmedabad, where the children are taught free of charge while their schools stay shut due to COVID-19

All these stories of people and organisations stepping up to help those in need during this pandemic, gives us at UMC the strength to keep working everyday. We hope that these stories help you as well, to keep going and doing the best you can.



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